



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

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CONTACT: SENATOR MARKLEIN
(608) 266-0703

Sen. Marklein Votes For a New Arena for the Milwaukee Bucks

Bipartisan Support Key Factor in Proposal Moving Forward

MADISON— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) today voted in favor of \$55 million in state funding for construction of a new arena for the Milwaukee Bucks in the City of Milwaukee. Citing bipartisan support as key to his final decision, Marklein also said that the deal is a financial win for the state of Wisconsin.

“After careful study of the proposed deal, constituent input and bipartisan support from my colleagues in the Senate, I decided to support the investment in the arena because it makes sense financially for the city, county and state,” Marklein said. “The income taxes paid by players more than cover our state’s investment in the project, even without projected increases that could add to our overall revenue into the future.”

The proposed plan commits the state of Wisconsin to pay \$55 million, which represents 11% of the total project cost. According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB), the state of Wisconsin currently collects an average of approximately \$6.5 million per year in income taxes from professional basketball players who play in Milwaukee.

In addition, the proposed plan allows the state to avoid future responsibility for the Bradley Center property and contains protective financial provisions if the Bucks decide to leave the state in the future.

“I think it is important to get our state out of the arena business, keep the Bucks in Wisconsin and take advantage of economic development opportunities that will surround the arena,” Marklein said. “Without our investment and commitment to this project, we lose the team, risk financial liabilities for the Bradley Center building and miss opportunities to grow jobs in Milwaukee. If the Bucks leave, there will be a cost to all Wisconsin taxpayers that could impact future support for schools, the university system and other state programs.”

“Critics of the plan have said that the state should not invest in the arena when other state institutions have received less funding in the recent biennial budget,” Marklein said. “However, the funding to pay for the arena project comes directly from the income taxes paid on salaries generated by use of the arena. Without the arena, these dollars are not part of our state’s revenue, so we aren’t making this investment in lieu of another.”

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